

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

29606

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ACTION

June 18, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Memo to the President on Soviet Five Power Conference

You asked Gerard Smith for a memorandum commenting on the Soviet proposal for a Five Power Conference. He finds it "serious" and worth taking seriously. He wants to consult with the British and French and suggests we thoroughly explore the issues before making a definitive reply.

Obviously, we should think about the best way to handle the Soviet proposal since, whatever else its purpose, it is patently designed to put us in a bind.

-- On the one hand, we cannot oppose "disarmament," no matter how unrealistic and absurd the Soviet proposals may be.

-- On the other hand, the Soviets are presumably banking on a Chinese rejection, which they will use to isolate Peking as much as possible on the "Peace" issue.

-- We can end up in the role of "colluding" with the Soviets to put pressure on China.

Your memorandum to the President (1) points out this aspect, (2) requests authorization for a preliminary analysis of different ways of handling the Soviet proposal and the issues it raises, and (3) includes interim guidance, taking a positive stand on the idea of a conference, if all other powers agree.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That you forward the memorandum to the President (Tab A).
2. That you sign the NSSM (Tab A of the President's memo).

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It seems fairly obvious that we are undergoing a barrage of disarmament proposals, as outlined by Brezhnev on March 30. Some of his list, reduction

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of budgets, worldwide disarmament conferences, nuclear free zones, are yet to come. The point is that we should give some thought to organizing (presumably under the Verification Panel?) whatever work will need to be done. For example, Brezhnev's naval limitations proposal should be studied not only in the Indian Ocean but for the Mediterranean, Cuba, etc.

While the Soviet list is for the most part window dressing, it should be recalled that in previous periods the Soviets have usually wound up claiming credit for their shopping list, and, at some point, prosecuting us for our failure to reply or take them seriously.

In any case, it might be worth having the entire Soviet list reviewed in order to select those which we might respond to, or originate. *Wayne Smith Concur*

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY  
WASHINGTON

ACDA-5088

OFFICE OF  
THE DIRECTOR

~~SECRET / EYES ONLY~~  
June 16, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Soviet Note of June 15th re  
Five-Power Nuclear Conference

The Soviet proposal to convene at the earliest time a conference of the five nuclear weapons nations is a follow up on the Brezhnev March 30th speech statement: "We are for nuclear disarmament by all states which have nuclear weapons and for convening to this end a conference of the five nuclear powers. . . ."

The tenor of the Soviet note is serious and I think it should be taken seriously. At least the USSR should not be left with an exclusive role as "organizer" of disarmament negotiations.

It is probably safe to assume that there is an element of anti-Chinese content in the Soviet initiative and this should be kept in mind in any examination of the five-power conference idea.

It presents opportunities as well as difficulties for us.

Because of the complexities of the problems involved, comprehensive questions of nuclear disarmament do not seem ripe for solution and it should not be expected that a conference would result in a comprehensive disarmament agreement.

The proposed conference would be aimed at nuclear disarmament measures, comprehensive as well as partial. You will recall that declared Soviet policy favors on-site inspection for measures of actual disarmament. A conference would afford opportunity to explore the degree of present Soviet willingness to submit to such inspection.

The asymmetries of the nuclear positions of the five parties, especially those of China and France vis-a-vis the United States and the USSR, do not bode well for any major disarmament agreement emerging from such a conference--but some progress on arms control measures might be possible.

As long as progress is being made on a bilateral basis in SALT and possibly a multilateral basis in Geneva, we should be extremely careful about setting up what might be a competing forum which could prejudice existing efforts. On this score, after the Brezhnev speech I was advised in Vienna that the five-power conference would be in no way inconsistent with SALT, and Amb. Leonard was advised in Geneva that it would not prejudice CCD efforts.

The concept of engaging the Chinese People's Republic in disarmament negotiations is a significant part of current thinking about possible evolution of Chinese-American relations. This Soviet initiative could be the occasion for a US inquiry at Warsaw as to any Chinese interest in such a conference.

A five-power conference could have some positive effect on efforts to implement non-proliferation policy.

A comprehensive nuclear test ban, on which you recently directed that a policy review be carried out, is a likely topic. Brezhnev has referred more than once, in recent weeks, to elimination of nuclear testing as a Soviet objective, but the prospect is not bright for much French or Chinese interest in a test ban at this time.

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At SALT in the discussion of a subsidiary agreement to control risks of accidental war, the Soviets proposed a clause looking to the accession by other nuclear powers to a Soviet-American accident agreement. A five-power conference might usefully get into this range of problems (including communication link question).

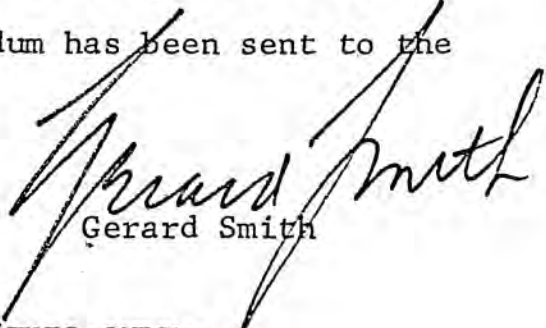
The Soviet note says: ". . . it has not yet become possible to turn back the process of stockpiling increasingly destructive means of mass annihilation. . . ." On this score the existing US Geneva proposal for a cut-off on fissionable material production for weapons purposes is directly pertinent.

It is almost certain that at such a conference the question of non-use of nuclear weapons would arise. It should not be ruled out that some "non-use" formula could be in our interest. At several times in the past we have proposed qualified "non-use" formulas, e.g.: in 1957 "Each party assumes an obligation not to use nuclear weapons if an armed attack has not placed the party in a situation of individual or collective self-defense."

The above is a sampling of the type of considerations that I think should be thoroughly explored before any definitive reaction is given to the Soviet initiative. In the interim, I think the United States position should be one of willingness to give serious consideration to the Soviet proposal.

Early consultation with the UK and France is needed, regardless of what the eventual US position may be.

A copy of this memorandum has been sent to the Secretary of State.

  
Gerard Smith~~TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY~~